

Meeting Notes
Tenant Work Group
Tuesday, June 23, 2009
6:30-8:30pm
Executive Conference Room
101 Monroe Street
Rockville, MD 20850

Work Group Members in attendance: Matt Losak (Chair), Rick Nelson, Dale Tibbitts, Harrietta Kelly, Maureen Ross, Alice Wilkerson, Chuck Short

Via Conference Call: Felicia Eberling

Staff participants: Megan Moriarty, IMPACT Silver Spring; Patrice Cheatham, DHCA; Debbie Spielberg, County Council

Agenda

- Review and approve notes
- Committee work plan reports
- Update on survey
- Website comments
- Public Comment
- Other business

Notes:

Matt Losak called the meeting to order at 6:45pm. The work group approved the June 9 meeting minutes.

The group then discussed the work plan from Committee 2: Code Update and Enforcement. Debbie Spielberg presented the most recent draft of their findings and recommendations (see attached). The group reviewed the findings and recommendations associated with Article II including the complaint process. Debbie will add a note to the findings that many issues are resolved at the discretion of the investigator. Rick suggested that an additional recommendation be for all cases to be documented, whether they are formal complaints or not.

Chuck recommended making the website more user friendly for tenants and that explains the complaint process including the ability to remain anonymous since that concern was heard at multiple public meetings. This could be a part of the new 311 process. The group discussed the timeframe that landlords have to respond to a tenant complaint. In terms of health and safety issues, there is a timeframe, but not for every letter written. Rick suggested urging landlords to be responsive within a certain period of time. Chuck said that a section in final report could include best practices to improve working relationships between landlords and tenants. The Committee will address this issue of timeliness in its next draft. The Handbook should have a place for a communication log to track contact with management.

Maureen suggested that the final report equip the landlords with some tools also, so they know what to do and what is expected. Willow Manor Apartments has a good example of complaint tracking and meetings to resolve issues.

The group discussed a standard lease and allowing renters 48 hours to review it before signing it if it is not a standard lease. The model lease could be translated and explained line by line on website. The rights of renters should be enumerated in the handbook. The preamble of the standard lease should include the most common issues for renters.

Debbie will research the fee structure and whether or not they are graduated.

Matt adjourned the meeting at 8:30pm.

Upcoming Work Group Meetings:

Tuesday, June 30, 6:30pm, County Executive's conference room

Tuesday, July 7, 6:30pm, County Executive's conference room

Tuesday, July 21, 6:30pm, County Executive's conference room